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Summary record of the 36th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 30 October 2015, at 3 p.m.

Chair:	Mr. Hilale	(Morocco)
later:	Ms. Kupradze (Vice-Chair)	(Georgia)
later:	Mr. Hilale (Chair)	(Morocco)
later:	Ms. Kupradze (Vice-Chair)	(Georgia)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 28: Social development (*continued*) (A/C.3/70/L.14 and A/C.3/70/L.15)

Draft resolution A/C.3/70/L.14: Persons with albinism

1. **Mr. Dzonzi** (Malawi), introducing the draft resolution, said that persons with albinism were often subjected to multiple forms of discrimination and challenges that were often overlooked in development policies and programmes. They also faced multiple health problems that affected their daily lives. The report of the Secretary-General on the situation of persons with albinism, requested in the draft resolution, would have a particular focus on the challenges related to social inclusion, health, education and employment.

2. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that Burundi, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Zambia had joined the sponsors.

Draft resolution A/C.3/70/L.15: Integrating volunteering into peace and development: the plan of action for the next decade

3. **Mr. Giacomelli da Silva** (Brazil), introducing the draft resolution, said that the draft resolution incorporated the most important recent developments, particularly the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Volunteerism was an important component of any strategy for poverty eradication, sustainable development, youth empowerment, climate change, disaster prevention and management, social integration, humanitarian action and peacebuilding. It could therefore be a valuable tool for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. He called on all Member States to foster the virtues of volunteerism worldwide.

4. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that Argentina, Armenia, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Jordan, Mali, Paraguay, and Togo had joined the sponsors.

(b) Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (*continued*) (A/C.3/70/L.9 and A/C.3/70/L.12)

Draft resolution A/C.3/70/L.9: Promoting social integration through social inclusion

5. **Mr. Habich Morales** (Peru), introducing the draft resolution, said that social inclusion was a challenge for States as they worked under an ambitious and transformative vision for the future in light of the recently adopted 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which required a new focus to effectively address the challenges and commitments entered into in past conferences, such as the 1995 World Summit for Social Development. The social component of the 2030 Agenda was essential, and its implementation should focus on programmes that would lead to more inclusive, participatory and fair societies. The biggest challenge facing developing countries was to convert economic growth into a better quality of life for their people. The draft resolution recognized the importance of social integration and an inclusive society, in which all peoples, especially the most vulnerable, could fully enjoy their rights, shoulder their obligations and contribute to society on equal footing. In line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the text recognized the cross-cutting nature of social inclusion and incorporated language strictly in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals, emphasizing their integrated and indivisible nature.

6. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that Guatemala, Madagascar, Malawi, Panama and Paraguay had joined the sponsors.

Draft resolution A/C.3/70/L.12: Cooperatives in social development

7. **Mr. Sukhee** (Mongolia), introducing the draft resolution, said that Antigua and Barbuda, China, Croatia, Estonia, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Israel, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands, Panama, Paraguay, Portugal, Slovenia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America had joined the sponsors.

8. Cooperatives remained a powerful economic and social force, representing 1 billion individuals worldwide and providing income to more than 25 million people. The largest 300 cooperatives in the world had a combined annual revenue of more than $2.2 trillion, created more jobs than their corporate counterparts and invested in innovative approaches to wider social problems, such as natural resource management and access to education and health care. The cooperative business model brought long-term

sustainability to enterprises, as demonstrated by the resilience of cooperative financial institutions in the aftermath of the global financial and economic crisis. Democratically governed, local cooperative enterprises based on values and focused on people were well-suited to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda had acknowledged the role of cooperatives owing to their active participation in relevant discussions and events.

9. Presenting an oral amendment to the text, he said that in paragraph 7, the words "including regional initiatives" should be added to the end of the sentence.

10. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that Burundi, Cameroon, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia and Niger had joined the sponsors.

Agenda item 29: Advancement of women (*continued*) (A/C.3/70/L.24)

Draft resolution A/C.3/70/L.24: Improvement of the situation of women and girls in rural areas

11. **Mr. Sukhee** (Mongolia), introducing the draft resolution, said that Brazil, Chad, Guinea-Bissau, Liechtenstein, Paraguay, Peru and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia had joined the sponsors.

12. Women and girls continued to be economically and socially disadvantaged. While important progress had been made in many countries towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, including gender-related goals and targets, rural women continued to struggle more than women in urban areas and rural and urban men. The report of the Secretary-General had stressed that more robust gender-responsive approaches and greater investment in rural development and rural women were needed in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

13. The 2030 Agenda was an integral part of the draft resolution. In order to bring further development of rural women and girls in line with Goal 5, the term "girls" had been added to the title and relevant paragraphs. The draft resolution also considered indigenous peoples, older women, food security and nutrition, gender-responsive and climate-resilient rural development strategies and agricultural production, mitigation of post-conflict situations, peace mediation and mitigation of the impacts of climate change.

14. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that Central African Republic, Ethiopia and Mali had joined the sponsors.

Agenda item 68: Promotion and protection of the rights of children (*continued*)

(a) Promotion and protection of the rights of children (*continued*) (A/C.3/70/L.28 and A/C.3/70/L.29)

Draft resolution A/C.3/70/L.28: Rights of the Child

15. **Mr. Maes** (Luxembourg), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the European Union and the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, said that the current draft resolution had been updated to reflect relevant recent developments and the 2015 theme: the right to education. The text addressed a comprehensive range of issues in relation to the promotion and protection of the rights of the child, including the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols, non-discrimination, violence against children, children affected by armed conflict and child labour.

16. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that Andorra, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Central African Republic, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia had joined the sponsors.

Draft resolution A/C.3/70/L.29: The girl child

17. **Mr. Ntwaagae** (Botswana), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), said that the theme of the current draft resolution was water, sanitation and hygiene. As such, the draft resolution sought to highlight the particular hardships that children, especially girls, endured in their daily lives as a result of the lack of access to water, sanitation and hygiene, and how that negatively impacted their ability to enjoy their basic human rights and fundamental freedoms. The resolution on the girl child was vital to the SADC region because of the role it could play in galvanizing global support for the respect, protection and promotion of the rights of children, particularly the girl child. It focused international attention on issues highly prevalent in the SADC region, such as child-headed households and access to water, sanitation and hygiene, which might otherwise escape notice and thus

continue to impede the girl child from realizing her full human potential.

18. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that Benin, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, Guinea-Bissau, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Morocco, Niger and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia had joined the sponsors.

Agenda item 69: Rights of indigenous peoples (*continued*) (A/C.3/70/L.26)

Draft resolution A/C.3/70/L.26: Rights of indigenous peoples

19. **Ms. Sabja** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) introduced the draft resolution. The text highlighted efforts to make fully operational the outcome document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, held in 2014. It also highlighted the promotion of the objectives in the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples through national and regional efforts.

20. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that Argentina, Armenia, Chad, Cuba, Guatemala, Paraguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) had joined the sponsors.

Agenda item 106: Crime prevention and criminal justice (*continued*) (A/C.3/70/L.8)

Draft resolution A/C.3/70/L.8: Strengthening the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme, in particular its technical cooperation capacity

21. **Mr. Lambertini** (Italy), introducing the draft resolution, said that Denmark, France, Hungary, Iraq, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal and Slovenia had joined the sponsors.

22. The main purpose of the resolution was to build consensus on and highlight the combat against transnational crime within the broader framework of United Nations policy and action, promote the universality and implementation of relevant instruments and confirm support for the technical assistance activities of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in that field. The current draft resolution would overhaul and streamline the previous text, taking into consideration the many important events that had occurred in the intervening year.

23. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that Austria, Belgium, Benin, Bulgaria, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Greece, Kazakhstan, Malta, Micronesia, Paraguay, San Marino and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia had joined the sponsors.

Agenda item 107: International drug control (*continued*) (A/C.3/70/L.10)

Draft resolution A/C.3/70/L.10: International cooperation against the world drug problem

24. **Mr. Ríos Sánchez** (Mexico), introducing the draft resolution, said that the content of the draft resolution had been updated. It emphasized human rights and development, focused on the social impacts of the world drug problem and referenced the special session of the General Assembly to be held in April 2016.

25. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Benin, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Kazakhstan and Paraguay had joined the sponsors.

Agenda item 72: Promotion and protection of human rights (*continued*) (A/70/40)

(b) Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms (*continued*) (A/70/56, A/70/111, A/70/154, A/70/166, A/70/167, A/70/203, A/70/212, A/70/213, A/70/216, A/70/217, A/70/255, A/70/257, A/70/258, A/70/259, A/70/260, A/70/261, A/70/263, A/70/266, A/70/270, A/70/271, A/70/274, A/70/275, A/70/279 and Corr.1, A/70/285, A/70/286, A/70/287, A/70/290, A/70/297, A/70/303, A/70/304, A/70/306, A/70/310, A/70/316, A/70/334, A/70/342, A/70/345, A/70/347, A/70/361, A/70/371, A/70/405, A/70/414, A/70/415 and A/70/438)

(c) Human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives (*continued*) (A/70/313, A/70/332, A/70/352, A/70/362, A/70/392, A/70/393, A/70/411, A/70/412; A/C.3/70/2, A/C.3/70/4 and A/C.3/70/5)

26. **Mr. Saito** (Japan) said that, although individual Governments had the primary responsibility for promoting and protecting human rights, the

international community should express concern when warranted. In that regard, Japan had been engaging in human rights dialogues with many States, taking into account their history, culture, tradition and specific situations.

27. The human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea remained a very serious concern. In 2014, it had become a formal agenda item in the Security Council. In 2015, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) had established an office in Seoul, and the Human Rights Council had held a panel discussion on the issue. Despite those efforts, there were no signs of improvement. Japan and the European Union had therefore decided once again to sponsor a draft resolution on the issue and expected that it would continue to be discussed in the Security Council. Additionally, Japan attached great importance to the abduction issue, which was one of the most serious human rights violations of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

28. With regard to the human rights situation in Syria, Japan strongly condemned the blatant violation of human rights and international law by all parties to the conflict and was deeply concerned by the influx of large numbers of refugees into Europe and the threat posed by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), not only to the Middle East, but to the international order itself. A political solution to the conflict should be based on the Geneva communiqué, and a regime transition process led by the Syrians themselves would advance progress.

29. The Government of Myanmar had taken steps towards democratization and national reconciliation, and Japan welcomed the nationwide ceasefire agreement. His Government hoped that the elections in November would be held in a free and fair manner, but remained deeply concerned about the situation of ethnic and religious minorities in the country, including those in Rakhine State. Japan remained open to bilateral human rights dialogue and encouraged Myanmar's efforts to unify the country.

30. Many issues still needed to be improved in the human rights situation in Iran, including limitations on freedom of expression and the detention of journalists. Japan noted Iran's positive engagement in their annual bilateral human rights dialogue and hoped to see Iran make progress in the protection of the rights of its citizens and the status of women. His Government expected cooperation between Iran and the international community, in particular OHCHR and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, to be strengthened.

31. **Ms. AlMuzaini** (Kuwait) said that her country supported all international efforts to strengthen and protect human rights, including the adoption by consensus of instruments that would uphold those rights while taking into account the cultural and religious characteristics of States.

32. Initiatives to strengthen respect for human rights could facilitate States' efforts to promote sustainable development and, in accordance with its Constitution, Kuwait had accorded the highest priority to promoting and safeguarding human rights and fundamental freedoms within the country. The Kuwaiti Government had adopted legislation to that end and was striving to disseminate an understanding of human rights values throughout Kuwaiti society. Kuwait would continue its efforts to uphold the international conventions on human rights to which it was a party and, in accordance with the Paris Principles, was establishing a national human rights office. Her country was, moreover, making every effort to implement the recommendations made pursuant to the adoption of its second periodic report, submitted in January 2015 under the universal periodic review of the Human Rights Council.

33. Increasing attention was being accorded to human rights violations. Against that backdrop, Kuwait condemned illegal Israeli practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel's ongoing violation of the human rights of the Palestinian people, including its restrictions on their freedom of movement, as well as the annexation of their territory, the destruction of homes and other flagrant violations of the principles of human rights as embodied in United Nations resolutions and the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. In that regard, her delegation shared the concerns expressed by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, including with regard to Israel's ongoing attacks against Palestinian places of worship. The international community had a great responsibility to put an end to those illegal violations by the Occupying Power, as well as an obligation to fulfil its commitments to apply legitimate international resolutions.

34. The Kuwaiti delegation was also pained by the continued violence in Syria, now entering its fifth year, and its devastating repercussions on people and property. Roughly half of that country's inhabitants lived in difficult humanitarian circumstances, whether as refugees in neighbouring countries or as displaced persons. Kuwait stressed the need to redouble international efforts to expedite a political solution that would allow the Syrian people to realize their aspirations to a life of liberty and dignity. She reiterated her country's commitment to promoting and spreading a culture of human rights and international cooperation through its participation in all international human rights forums and its partnership with all United Nations and other relevant entities, as well as non-governmental human rights organizations, to achieve a better life for all humanity.

35. *Ms. Kupradze (Georgia), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

36. **Ms. Gebrekidan** (Eritrea) said that the people of Eritrea, who had fought for their basic human rights for over half a century, attached great importance to human rights and fundamental freedoms. Her Government had renewed its commitment to the promotion and protection of political, economic, social and cultural rights for all. The Ministry of Justice was raising awareness among enforcement agencies, local officials and the general public on the implementation of the recently published civic and penal codes. A four-year medium-term development programme incorporated human rights and focused on increasing development efforts, restructuring public institutions and consolidating the nation-building process.

37. All States must implement universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms to enhance international cooperation and solidarity, which should place equal emphasis on both International Covenants on Human Rights and be founded on the principles of non-politicization, non-selectivity and non-confrontation. The issue of human rights should not be used to serve a political agenda. National Governments had the primary responsibility to promote and protect the human rights of all persons within their respective territories. International engagement on that issue should therefore strengthen the capacity of States to fulfil their national priorities and international obligations. Eritrea strongly supported the universal periodic review; as a forum for constructive and transparent dialogue, it had proven to be the best mechanism in addressing the human rights situation in all States.

38. Human rights discussions could not be meaningful without addressing poverty, instability, occupation and unjustified sanctions, which greatly impacted the right to live in peace and the right to development. Her delegation urged the international community to help end the occupation of sovereign territories and unconditionally lift illegal and unjust sanctions.

39. **Mr. Elbahi** (Sudan) said that his country had done much to advance and strengthen human rights. To uphold the rights of children, for example, Sudan had established specialized juvenile courts in accordance with international legal norms to hear cases involving minors. Sudan had acceded to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and had signed the Optional Protocols thereto. It had also acceded to the Convention concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment and the Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour. Furthermore, children under 18 years of age were prohibited from joining the army, police or security forces. Sudan was also actively promoting the participation of women in public life. Women held some 30 per cent of seats in parliament and held senior positions in Government, the police and the armed forces. Moreover, his Government had taken steps to guarantee the rights of persons with disabilities, including the establishment of a national council on disability, half of whose members were themselves persons with disabilities. Sudan made every effort to ensure that persons with disabilities participated fully in all areas of life in the country. The Sudanese Government had also made significant progress in its efforts to combating human trafficking: it had amended its legislation on trafficking, signed agreements with neighbouring countries on transborder security, and had hosted a regional conference on combatting human trafficking and smuggling in the Horn of Africa. Sudan had drawn up a comprehensive plan on strengthening human rights and had established an independent human rights committee. There was also a special office to investigate alleged human rights violations and bring perpetrators of human rights abuses to justice. His country would continue to work closely with all relevant United Nations bodies, special rapporteurs and special procedures.

40. For States to promote human rights worldwide, it was critical to avoid any politicization or double standards. Human rights issues must be addressed in appropriate forums, including, in particular, under the universal periodic review of the Human Rights Council. It was crucial to address human rights holistically, inter alia, by addressing the root causes of any violations: those included armed conflicts, the imposition of unilateral sanctions and certain States' high external debt burdens. In that regard, recent critical comments by the representative of the United States of America regarding the human rights situation in Sudan were regrettable. All countries, including the United States, must address domestic human rights challenges, and they must refrain from politicizing human rights issues and imposing double standards. Instead they must seek to address human rights challenges through dialogue and international cooperation.

41. **Ms. Mainali** (Nepal) said that human rights were the central pillar of democracy, governance and sustainable development. The constitution of Nepal, promulgated in 2015, reaffirmed her Government's strong commitment to human rights by guaranteeing political, social, cultural and economic rights and ensuring that there would be no discrimination on the basis of religion, race, origin, caste or ideology. Nepal had implemented national plans of action to promote equity, equality and social justice with greater transparency and accountability in the governance system.

42. Her Government prioritized comprehensive national policies and action plans on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008) were being implemented to ensure the meaningful participation of women in the post-conflict peace and development process. Her Government also recognized the positive role of the media, civil society organizations and human rights defenders. It had been implementing a five-year national plan of action on human rights, which stressed the collective responsibility of all stakeholders for its implementation, including central and local agencies, bilateral and multilateral donors and development partners. A commission on disappeared persons and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission had been established to address the human rights violations that had occurred during the conflict.

43. The massive earthquakes that struck Nepal were a major setback to the progress that had been made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Nepal was currently working to integrate the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development into its development plans, focusing on the eradication of poverty and hunger and the promotion of human rights. In order to protect the basic human rights of migrant workers, coordinated and concerted efforts were needed at the national, regional and international levels. Nepal therefore supported initiatives to define the roles and responsibilities of countries of origin, transit and destination and work collaboratively to protect the rights of all migrant workers and their families.

44. While her Government had achieved significant progress, it needed to redouble its efforts to establish strong national legislation with consistent policy frameworks and efficient and effective institutional mechanisms for the full enjoyment of human rights. As a least developed country emerging from conflict, Nepal faced significant constraints in mobilizing resources. She called on the international community to strengthen its partnership with Nepal to assist in the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms of its people.

45. **Mr. Jaime Calderón** (El Salvador) said that migration was a crosscutting issue with many dimensions, and it was therefore necessary to analyse carefully its causes and consequences and adopt solutions that involved migrant populations. Since 2009, El Salvador had implemented a governmental policy to provide care and protection to its compatriots abroad and had focused on protecting the human rights of migrants, irrespective of their migratory status. There were many causes of migration, including better jobs, better economic conditions, family reunification, natural disasters and violence. His Government recognized the positive impact of migrants on economic, social and cultural development in both countries of origin and destination.

46. In 2014 there had been a surge in the irregular migration of unaccompanied children and adolescents towards the United States of America. The States of the Northern Triangle (El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras) had taken immediate as well as medium-

and long-term actions to address the migratory dynamic and improve their socioeconomic conditions. The Plan of the Alliance for Prosperity in the Northern Triangle was therefore designed to improve the living conditions in each of those States so that adults, children and adolescents could consider migration an option, not an obligation. Since the Plan had been launched, it had focused on productive development, investment in human capital, citizen security and stronger local institutions.

47. The resolution on migrant children and adolescents reaffirmed the need to effectively promote and protect their human rights and fundamental freedoms, independent of their migratory status. The resolution had requested the United Nations to follow up on the situation of accompanied and unaccompanied migrant children and adolescents by incorporating that information in the report addressing the human rights of migrants, which had been presented in the current session of the General Assembly. His delegation expressed deep concern that the mandate had been overlooked and the information on the situation of accompanied and unaccompanied mirors had not been included in the report (A/70/259).

48. The challenges of migration could not be addressed by States in isolation. The international community must carefully analyse the relationship between migration and national security and borders, recognizing that secure borders should never come at the cost of human rights violations against migrant populations. Migrants should not be assumed to be criminals and should never be treated as such. The international community must open its eyes and realize that the loss of even one human being was too much and required action. States would need to look beyond borders and territorial security to find solutions.

49. **Ms. Lwin** (Myanmar) said that the United Nations had assisted Member States with many achievements in the realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Nevertheless, challenges remained; country-specific mandates and resolutions continued, even though they hindered the promotion and protection of human rights based on the principles of cooperation and genuine dialogue. Many Member States, including Myanmar, firmly believed that the universal periodic review process was the most reliable mechanism, whereas the working methods and modalities of country-specific mandates led to polarization and disagreement. Under the universal periodic review process, all Member States had the right to submit national reports and provide facts and information, which was not the case under country-specific mandates. Both the Special Adviser on Myanmar and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar had presented their reports under the same agenda item. Myanmar had been permitted very limited time to respond to their lengthy draft reports, and its responses could not be annexed to the reports, thus denying it the right to address allegations, discrepancies and factual flaws and weakening the balance of the report. Myanmar's views had never been sought before the release of the report of the Special Adviser.

50. Far-reaching reforms in Myanmar had reached many significant benchmarks. There was greater freedom of expression and freedom of peaceful assembly and association and many well-functioning non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and labour unions. There was also a national human rights commission that operated under the Paris Principles. In the past four and a half years, her Government had enacted or amended over 180 laws, many of which reflected Myanmar's obligations under international human rights treaties. From 2011 to 2015, Myanmar had joined four such treaties, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict. The upcoming elections also constituted a milestone on the path to democratic transition. While her Government had made significant progress, it was also well aware of the challenges and addressed them with determination and transparency. It had invited many international partners and high-level United Nations personnel, including the mandate holders on Myanmar, to visit the country. Her Government appreciated the strong support and encouragement from the international community, but was concerned about attempts to overshadow its remarkable achievements by focusing on a few challenges that were common to many other States.

51. The international community must seriously ponder whether it was fair to place a country that had made significant positive changes under the scrutiny of numerous parallel mechanisms, including the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar and the High Commissioner for Human

Rights and Partnership Group on Myanmar. It was time to ensure that the work of the Committee was guided by the principles of universality, impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity and eliminate double standards and politicization in the promotion and protection of human rights.

52. *Mr. Hilale (Morocco) resumed the Chair.*

53. **Mr. Ndong Ella** (Gabon) said that respect for human rights and dignity was a prerequisite for harmonious development based on the well-being of all peoples, without discrimination on the basis of gender, religion, political opinion, ethnicity or social status. To establish Gabon as an emerging country by 2025, his Government had introduced reforms that focused on protecting the most vulnerable, particularly women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons.

54. The retirement pensions of older persons had been increased and they had access to social welfare, including full coverage for the treatment of cancer and renal failure. Since 2011, the Government had provided 200 million CFA francs in microfinancing to persons with disabilities for their economic and social empowerment, and other measures were being established to ensure their participation in public affairs and to outline a national plan for accessibility for their full integration into society. Legislation and regulations that benefited widows and orphans had been established with support from the First Lady's foundation in order to combat dispossession and ill-treatment. Gabon subscribed to many international instruments regarding refugees, especially the Geneva Convention and the Organization of African Unity Convention governing the specific aspects of refugee problems in Africa. His Government had always hosted refugees and asylum seekers from conflict areas in the subregion; most victims were women, children and older persons. They benefited from government assistance, including access to education, health care and land in order to facilitate their integration and economic independence.

55. Since the right to life was sacred, Gabon had abolished the death penalty in 2010 and had joined the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The promotion and protection of human rights required strong cooperation between States and United Nations mechanisms, especially the Human Rights Council, the universal periodic review mechanism, the special procedures and treaty bodies. Gabon was fully committed to implementing the recommendations from the universal periodic review in 2008 and 2012. To adapt to the new requirements and standards for human rights protection, his Government had strengthened national legislation and the legal system. It had established courts of first instance, with jurisdictions for minors and monitoring mechanisms to prevent and combat the ill-treatment of children.

56. Responses to human rights issues must be sought through a permanent dialogue between the United Nations and its Member States. Confrontation would not be constructive at a time when the world was facing numerous humanitarian challenges that would not be overcome without global efforts.

57. **Mr. Dabbashi** (Libya) said that Libya was experiencing a critical phase of instability that impeded efforts by its legitimate Government to uphold human rights throughout the country. Many armed terrorist groups, including Al-Qaida and ISIL were challenging State authorities, impeding the country's democratic transition, undermining security and perpetrating human rights violations, including torture, extra-legal execution and forced disappearances. The legitimate Government of Libya denounced the human rights violations committed by all armed groups and condemned all actions that violated national legislation and international instruments. His Government was striving to fight impunity, restore the rule of law, and investigate all crimes, regardless of the identity of their victims or perpetrators. He emphasized, however, that his Government would be unable to uphold human rights fully or address all instances of impunity until the arms embargo imposed on Libya was lifted, enabling it to expel the illegal militias that were occupying the country's capital. His country welcomed the establishment of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Investigation on Libya and stood ready to cooperate fully with that Investigation to ensure the success of its mandate.

58. In May 2015, the legitimate Libyan authorities had submitted the country's second periodic report under the universal periodic review of the Human Rights Council. Libya would continue to cooperate as far as it could with all United Nations human rights mechanisms. In that connection, he reiterated his country's open invitation to all United Nations special rapporteurs and special procedures to visit his country.

59. The people and legitimate Government of Libya were intent on moving forward with a State based on human rights, the rule of law and democracy, and would continue to respect all their international human rights obligations. The Libyan authorities were striving to uphold the rights of migrant workers, and combat the smuggling of migrants and human trafficking. They were also working closely with the European Union to combat illegal migration and save lives in the Mediterranean.

60. The Libyan authorities had recently taken a number of steps to promote and protect human rights, including the enactment of a law on transitional justice that provided for the establishment of a reconciliation and fact-finding mission to investigate human rights violations and established a fund to compensate victims. Libya had also enacted a law criminalizing torture, forced disappearances and discrimination and was striving to raise awareness among children and students of the need to uphold human rights.

61. Lastly, his delegation noted that in order to enjoy consensus, draft resolutions must take into account religious, cultural and legislative differences in societies and respect cultural pluralism. It rejected any attempts to enshrine concepts that violated the Sharia of Islam and the social values of the Libyan people.

62. **Mr. Perera** (Sri Lanka) said that, after nearly three decades of conflict, Sri Lanka had restored peace in 2009. However, peace had become elusive, and the opportunity to heal the wounds of the past, unite communities through reconciliation and build a nation that celebrated the rich diversity of the country had been squandered. A sense of triumphalism had polarized communities even further and isolated the country internationally. In January 2015, the people of Sri Lanka had elected a new Government with the participation of 81.52 per cent of registered voters, and a series of institutional changes had followed. The former military governors of the northern and eastern provinces had been replaced with two senior former civil servants in order to restore civilian administration, which had been strengthened by the progressive cessation of military involvement in civilian activities and by the conversion of high security zones into resettlement areas for internally displaced people.

63. Upon taking office, the new Government had acknowledged the State's past tragedies and emphasized the urgent need for healing and unity. In its declaration of peace, it paid respect to the peoples of all ethnicities and religions who had lost their lives, both during the conflict and since independence. Far-reaching constitutional changes had been introduced to reduce the powers of the executive presidency and place that office under the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court. A constitutional council had been established to ensure the independence and integrity of appointments to the judiciary, public service offices, the election commission and the national human rights commission, among others.

64. At the inauguration of the eighth parliament in September 2015, the President had affirmed that the formation of a national unity government was essential to obtaining bipartisan consensus. His Government fully recognized that the process of reconciliation and peacebuilding would involve addressing truth, justice, reparations and non-recurrence, as well as a political settlement that addressed the grievances of the Tamil people in Sri Lanka. In that regard, his Government had proposed a commission on truth, justice, reconciliation and non-recurrence and an office on missing persons. It would also set up an office for reparations to implement the recommendations of those bodies. A judicial mechanism with a special counsel had also been proposed, along with administrative and judicial reforms and a new constitution containing a bill of human rights. Those mechanisms would be designed through a process of consultations involving all stakeholders, including victims. The national human rights commission would be strengthened in accordance with the Paris Principles.

65. His Government looked forward to signing and ratifying the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance without delay. It was updating antiterrorism legislation to bring it in line with international best practices, reviewing legislation regarding public security ordinances and victim and witness protection and working with civil society groups to take their views into consideration. The Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence had visited Sri Lanka in April 2015, and his Government looked forward to inviting other special procedure mandate holders to visit as well. It was working closely with the Peacebuilding Support Office to initiate programmes to meet the immediate needs of the reconciliation process.

66. Sri Lanka had succeeded in rejoining the international community as a responsible, confident

and peaceful nation that respected the universal values of freedom, equality and justice. Reconciliation was a process that would take time and must be carefully planned and executed. His Government nevertheless remained firm in its resolve to ensure justice, remove the causes of terrorism and achieve a durable peace for the long-suffering people of Sri Lanka.

67. **Mr. Liu Jieyi** (China) said that all States were equal members of the international community and should therefore reject the politicization of human rights issues, refrain from interference in the internal affairs of any State on the pretext of promoting human rights, and respect the rights of Governments and peoples to choose their development path. Development was the foundation for peace and the sole route to the realization of human rights. Within the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the aspirations of developing countries must be fully respected to realize the rights to life and development, and developed countries should show good faith and honour their commitments to help developing countries advance in those goals.

68. States must continue to strengthen and improve their human rights work to meet the evolving needs of their citizens; respect the diversity of human rights development paths; view one another's human rights situations from a holistic, objective and impartial perspective; promote constructive cooperation; and settle disputes and differences through dialogue and consultations.

69. His Government had announced a number of major human rights initiatives, including a 10-year, $1 billion peace and development fund to support the work of the United Nations and advance multilateral cooperation; a South-South cooperation assistance fund, with an initial contribution of $2 billion, to help developing countries implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; and a $10 million donation to UN-Women to support women-related activities around the world and promote the protection of women's rights.

70. China had integrated human rights into a development path suited to its particular conditions. As a result, the Chinese people were enjoying a level of human rights protection that was better than ever before. China had halved the number of people living in poverty, provided employment for 770 million people, achieved universal coverage of nine-year compulsory education and established the initial structure for a universal medical insurance system and social security. The Chinese people were enjoying more legal guarantees of their rights and freedoms, and the protection of human rights and the rule of law had been further improved.

71. **Mr. Nkoloi** (Botswana) said that that the special procedure mandates were an important mechanism for the protection and promotion of universal human rights and fundamental freedoms. Human rights should be approached comprehensively, in a way that contributed to national and international development. Botswana participated actively in the work of the Human Rights Council and attached great importance to protection and respect for human rights. It supported the work of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and his Office, including the recent initiatives aimed at ensuring greater transparency and fairness in executing the mandate.

72. His Government was deeply concerned by some of the reports presented under the current agenda item, which clearly indicated that human rights abuses and other violations had been worsening in some parts of the world. Protracted conflicts had become fertile grounds for terrorist groups to incubate and carry out their heinous operations, and some States were indiscriminately and systematically committing gross human rights violations. Humanitarian emergencies, including those resulting from current migration patterns, were at a record high since the Second World War, and instability and insecurity were on the rise.

73. His delegation hoped that all actors involved in the promotion and protection of human rights could earnestly work together for the betterment of humanity. Their roles, particularly those of the special procedure mandate holders and other mechanisms of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, must be well defined to improve coordination and use resources efficiently.

74. *Ms. Kupradze (Georgia), Vice-Chair, resumed the Chair.*

75. **Ms. Moreno Guerra** (Cuba) said that her country reaffirmed its commitment to international cooperation for human rights based on the principles of mutual respect, truth, justice, universality, impartiality and non-selectivity, which was the only way to promote the protection of human rights at the international level. Nevertheless, some Powers continued to promote

selective initiatives against developing countries for political motivations and hegemonic interests and persisted in presenting numerous accusations of alleged human rights violations against third world countries; that practice ran counter to international law and the Charter of the United Nations and sought to justify the aggression and unilateral coercive measures inflicted on developing countries.

76. Some of those States, such as the United States, ignored their own notorious human rights violations. They passed judgement on others while saying nothing about their own wars of aggression and conquests, secret flights and prisons, abductions, extrajudicial executions using drones or concentration camps where torture and other violations occurred. Cuba was not a country that suffered from racial discrimination, police brutality or the ensuing deaths. Cuba did not torture individuals or keep them in judicial limbo, nor was there corruption in the political or electoral systems. Western Powers also continued to ignore the human rights violations that had caused waves of immigrants to arrive in Europe as they attempted to flee the misery and conflicts caused by those States, which had overthrown sovereign Governments by force or through so-called soft coups.

77. The universal periodic review was the appropriate mechanism to address the human rights situation in all States without distinction and without politicization. Her Government was working to implement the constructive recommendations made during the presentation of its second report to that mechanism. It fully cooperated with human rights procedures and mechanisms that were universally applied and engaged in positive dialogue with international treaty bodies. In that spirit, the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children were invited to visit Cuba. Her Government also maintained human rights dialogue with other States, including the United States, in which Cuba participated constructively while holding firm to its convictions.

78. The economic, trade and financial blockade imposed on Cuba was a flagrant, mass and systematic violation of the human rights of all Cubans.

79. Greater priority and visibility should be given to finding solutions to poverty, illiteracy and the lack of access to health, education and food. The international community should focus its efforts on the effective enjoyment of all human rights and the respect for cultural diversity, religion, right to self-determination and political, economic and social systems. It must banish hypocrisy and the spurious focus that served only the political agendas and geostrategic interests of large Powers.

80. **Mr. Castro Cordoba** (Costa Rica) said that his country was committed to combating poverty, inequality and all forms of discrimination and to promoting the right to development. It welcomed diversity and multiculturalism and urged respect for the rights of minors and vulnerable groups. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development would be crucial to achieving those goals. Its implementation must therefore incorporate the principles of universality, interdependence and indivisibility and take into consideration the specific needs of indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants, persons with disabilities, older persons, migrants and others.

81. Costa Rica called for the recognition of the needs of women faced with gender violence, especially migrant, indigenous and rural women, and their inclusion in short-, medium- and long-term public policies. The international community must combat the normalization of sexual violence as well as child and teenage pregnancy. It must prioritize the sexual and reproductive health of women in order to guarantee sexual and reproductive rights, including respect for sexual orientation and gender identity, and their inclusion as integral human rights. Costa Rica continued to strengthen the institutional framework for gender equality in political participation and decision-making. The full participation of women under equal conditions was encouraged through reforms to the electoral code and the establishment of a minimum quota in nominations for elections, party structures and training. Those types of policies should be implemented globally as well as within the United Nations system to ensure that all intergovernmental bodies fully integrated a gender perspective in all issues and in their mandates. Costa Rica called for the position of the Secretary-General to be held by a woman, not only because it was overdue, but because it was necessary to recognize and benefit from the contributions, abilities and the commitment that many qualified women could bring to that position.

82. As the world reeled from the worst humanitarian crisis in decades, which had displaced millions of

people, it was essential to respect the human rights of migrants, especially children and women. An active civil society was one of the most effective ways to prevent conflicts and violent extremism. A strong, multidimensional and comprehensive approach to human security was needed to fully protect those whose survival, way of life and dignity were at risk. The international community must address conflict and post-conflict situations and broaden efforts to protect civilians, combat sexual violence, protect children and women in armed conflict and establish peace and security. The rights and safety of those who worked to promote and protect the human rights of others should also be comprehensively addressed. He expressed concerned for the safety of journalists, who exercised their right to freedom of expression and opinion. The promotion, protection and realization of all human rights was essential to international governance. It was imperative to urgently respond to the existing international threats and humanitarian crises by strengthening international institutions and employing a strong human rights-based approach.

83. **Mr. Dzonzi** (Malawi) said that, upon becoming a multiparty democracy in 1994, his country had adopted a new constitution with a bill of rights. His Government was committed to a social and national order where human rights were enjoyed by all and believed that there was a link between human rights and sustainable development goals. The right to development was crucial to Malawi. In areas where people lacked access to housing, health, food security and other fundamentals of life, there could be no true peace, safety, security or pursuit of happiness. Sustainable development could therefore not be achieved without addressing those issues.

84. In regard to the right to education, Malawi had implemented a policy of free primary education and was working to meet Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals to establish free secondary education, which was currently heavily subsidized. His Government was committed to offering education to children, with particular emphasis on the girl child and children with disabilities. The President had recently hosted an event to promote higher education as an avenue for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in Malawi, Africa and beyond. The realization of the rights to water and sanitation was a major priority for his Government, which had developed policies to guide programming and planning at the national level and was working with local authorities, non-governmental organizations and service providers to apply sustainable technical solutions to the provision of water.

85. Many people had been internally displaced by heavy flooding during the 2014-2015 rainy season. His Government required support to strengthen the capacity for managing Malawi's response mechanism, financial resources and expertise to establish a proactive response to internal displacement. It was committed to the full enjoyment of the right to peaceful assembly and association, and the police service had been trained in modern public order and management skills. In order to pursue the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, States like Malawi needed protection from the effects of foreign debts and other related international financial obligations that impacted the full enjoyment of all human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights.

86. **Mr. Marani** (Argentina) said that his country was committed to combating all forms of discrimination, including discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. As a member of the Core Group LGBT, Argentina had helped to organize a high-level event regarding the equal inclusion of LGBTI peoples in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. All forms of violence against persons based on sexual orientation or gender identity must be eradicated. The international community must work towards guaranteeing the full recognition and exercise of human rights, even though the fundamental responsibility lay with States, which must also bring to justice those who impeded or denied those rights.

87. Repeated and frequent violations of the rights of older persons persisted, despite the positive aspects of the many existing instruments for their protection. However, most of those instruments were non-binding and not universal. Only the development of a universal and legally binding international instrument could allow the international community to ensure the full respect, protection and enjoyment of the human rights of older persons. The General Assembly had already approved the mandate to move forward in that area.

88. Argentina had actively participated in the drafting and negotiation of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance,

which was the first legally binding instrument to define enforced disappearances as a systematic practice and a crime that was not subject to statutes of limitations. The Convention condemned the wrongful removal of children who were forcibly displaced and established the right to truth. The work of the Committee had allowed for the development of preventive measures, including monitoring and early warning mechanisms. Currently, 51 States had ratified the Convention, and Argentina was committed to the goal of universal ratification.

89. The international community must strengthen the institutional framework and mechanisms for the promotion and protection of human rights at the national, regional and international levels in all areas of human rights, including the right to cultural diversity; the right to a true democracy with free, inclusive and transparent elections; and the rights of migrants, refugees and displaced persons. Both the Human Rights Council and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, especially its institutional framework and budget, must be strengthened.

90. **Mr. Mangisi** (Tonga) said that his country continued to advance in the area of human rights; the first democratically elected Prime Minister had taken office in 2015. As noted in the 2012 universal periodic review, democratic governance had been implemented with high levels of electoral participation. Tonga affirmed its cross-cutting commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights in the Samoa Pathway and acknowledged the importance of human rights to development, an adequate standard of living and social protections. The promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies was integral to the protection of human rights and the attainment of sustainable development, as evidenced by Sustainable Development Goal 16.

91. Climate change posed a threat to small island developing States in all areas of their work, including human rights. At the third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, Tonga had been described as the country with the second greatest risk of the interrelated threats of tsunamis, tropical cyclones and other climate hazards, posing further risks to the security and livelihood of its citizens. The immense financial and technical challenges, in addition to the environmental pressures, represented significant trials for Tonga. Those challenges impacted the State's ability to meet its international human rights obligations and underscored the value of genuine and durable partnerships.

Statements made in exercise of the right of reply

92. **Mr. Uğurluoğlu** (Turkey) said that the statement by the representative of Greece had portrayed a selective and one-sided interpretation of history and had conveniently omitted certain facts. In 1963, the Turkish Cypriots, who had been founding members of the State, had been forced out of government institutions and legislative and judiciary bodies, and the atrocities committed against them had been well documented in United Nations archives. In 1964, the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus had been deployed on the island. Those were the core facts of the Cyprus issue, which had been going on for more than 50 years. In the following 10 years, 180,000 Turkish Cypriots had been displaced on multiple occasions and forced to live scattered in enclaves. The military coup in 1974 had been instigated by the Greek military regime at the time to annex the islands. Turkey, acting within its rights and responsibilities under the 1960 agreement as a guarantor Power, had intervened to protect the Turkish Cypriots and to prevent the annexation.

93. The Turkish Cypriots had proven their political will to find a solution by overwhelmingly voting in favour of the United Nations comprehensive settlement plan during the separate, simultaneous referenda in 2004. Unfortunately, Turkish Cypriots continued to live in unacceptable isolation. Efforts towards ending the restrictions did not contradict Security Council resolutions 541 (1983) and 550 (1984), as stated in the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus (S/2015/17). The international community should engage in direct economic, commercial, social and cultural contact with Turkish Cypriots and end the injustice without further delay. Turkish Cypriot authorities were taking all necessary steps to ensure that the work of the Committee on Missing Persons proceeded unhindered. Hundreds of Turkish Cypriots had gone missing between 1963 and 1974; attempts to exploit a humanitarian issue for purposes of political propaganda undermined its excellent work.

94. Since 2005, the Immovable Property Commission had been operating in northern Cyprus to provide remedies to Greek Cypriots and had been endorsed by the European Court of Human Rights. Since the

opening of a crossing point in 2003, Greek Cypriots living in northern Cyprus could easily cross to southern Cyprus. There was a positive atmosphere on the island following the return of the Greek Cypriots to the negotiating table and the intensification of the comprehensive settlement negotiations. Turkey, as it had done in the past, would continue to support the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Good Offices Mission to reach a just and comprehensive settlement agreement on the island. The issues raised in the statement of one delegation on the matter would be responded to by their counterparts, the Turkish Cypriot side, whose voice unfortunately could not be heard in the current forum. Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots had established a joint technical committee to address cultural heritage issues, which had carried out several significant projects related to sites on both parts of the island.

95. **Ms. Pachoumi** (Cyprus) said that, in response to the Turkish delegation, it was undeniable that human rights violations had been ongoing in Cyprus for 41 years, since Turkey's invasion and occupation of the island. Her delegation strongly hoped that Turkey would end that situation, thus allowing a new era to begin, based on respect for international law and human rights.

96. **Mr. Choe** Myong Nam (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that his delegation reiterated its strong opposition to the politically motivated resolution on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea submitted by Japan and the European Union. His Government's principled position regarding the Japanese abduction cases had already been made public on many occasions, particularly in the joint declaration made by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Japan in September 2002. His country had made sincere and constructive efforts in that regard and had been fulfilling its obligations under the Stockholm agreement, while Japan, unfortunately, had not. The delegation of Japan, therefore, had no reason to incite hostility and confrontation by raising that issue. The continued groundless accusations made by Japan could be construed as nothing but preposterous attempts at naming and shaming as part of its domestic political agenda in order to pursue hostilities towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as it had done for half a century, while turning international attention away from its egregious crimes against humanity. It was a well-known historical fact that Japan had invaded many countries in Asia in the past, inflicting suffering and innumerable misfortunes on the people there. In Korea alone, Japan's crimes included 8.4 million forcible draftings and abductions, 1 million genocidal killings and 200,000 military sexual slaves during more than 40 years of military occupation. Japan attempted to avoid its moral and legal responsibilities for those crimes and continued to be strongly denounced by the international community for its deliberate failure to address its crimes against humanity. He urged the Japanese authorities to immediately address the State's egregious crimes against humanity, rather than resorting to futile politicization of the Japanese abduction cases.

97. **Mr. Yao** Shaojun (China) said that his delegation firmly rejected the gratuitous attacks and baseless fabrications by the United States delegation regarding the human rights situation in China. The work of the United Nations in the area of human rights must be guided by the principles of universality, impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity. The United States did not hesitate to criticize the human rights situations in many other States but showed no intention of reflecting on and improving its own terrible human rights record. Numerous facts showed that, while the old human rights problems of the United States remained unsolved, new human rights problems continued to emerge. Instead of addressing its own ever-worsening human rights situation, the United States had been more blatant in violating the human rights of other peoples and countries. The United States human rights record was nothing to be proud of, especially given that Native Americans and minorities were subjected to systematic discrimination; intelligence agencies used torture on detainees; prison conditions were appalling; the United States routinely and extensively tapped the phones of world leaders and its own people; everything was decided by money; and social inequality was constantly widening. China hoped that, in the future, the United States would take a close look at itself before commenting on the human rights situations in other States.

98. **Mr. Saito** (Japan), responding to the statement made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, said that, in the intergovernmental consultations between Japan and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in May 2014, despite its previous position on the matter, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had promised to conduct comprehensive and full-scale investigations into all missing Japanese people, including abductees. He

urged it to ensure the safe and immediate return of all abductees, provide a full account of each abduction case and extradite those responsible. The investigations should be conducted expeditiously so that those issues could be resolved in accordance with the Pyongyang Declaration.

99. Although the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had stated that the abductions issue should not be politicized, those acts of abduction, which had torn apart families, were without doubt a human rights issue. The Commission of Inquiry had recommended that abductees and their children should be returned, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea should sincerely accept those recommendations. The numbers mentioned by the representative on issues of the past were based on factual error and were totally groundless. For 70 years, since the end of World War II, the Japanese people had established a free and democratic nation that respected human rights and the rule of law. Japan had contributed to peace and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region and would continue to walk the path of a peace-loving nation. It had repeatedly expressed its heartfelt apology and deep remorse for its actions during World War II.

100. **Mr. Choe** Myong Nam (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that his delegation categorically rejected yet another misleading allegation made by the representative of Japan. Japan could neither deny nor justify its crimes against humanity, such as the 8.4 million forced draftings and abductions, 1 million genocidal killings and 200,000 military sexual slaves that had been committed by Japan in Korea alone. Regarding its past crimes against humanity, Japan should acknowledge moral and legal responsibility, make sincere apologies, bring perpetrators to justice and make due compensation. That was the only way that Japan could rid itself of the disgraceful label of enemy State, which it had been given after World War II for its crimes of aggression, war crimes and crimes against humanity. He urged the Japanese authorities to abandon the futile and meaningless politicization of the Japanese abduction cases and instead address its egregious past crimes against humanity as a matter of utmost priority.

101. **Mr. Saito** (Japan) said that his previous statement had explained Japan's position on the issues of the past that had been presented by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

102. **Ms. Shlychkova** (Russian Federation) said that her delegation regretted that certain States had used the discussion to promote biased approaches and their own political agendas. Given that the matter of Crimea had been raised, her delegation wished to inform the members of the Committee that the people of Crimea fully supported the reunification of the Russian Federation and Crimea, as confirmed, among others, by opinion polls conducted by the GfK group.

103. Crimean Tatars enjoyed equal rights with other peoples of Crimea and the Russian Federation. All citizens of the Russian Federation, including Crimea, were subject to its law and international human rights obligations, including access to justice. All violations were investigated and those responsible were prosecuted. The Commissioner for Human Rights of the Russian Federation was responsible for monitoring the human rights situation.

104. The Russian Federation had already done much to improve the situation of all peoples of Crimea, in particular by rehabilitating repressed peoples, recognizing Crimean Tatar as a State language, ensuring representation in government agencies, strengthening social security and advancing education, culture and interreligious dialogue and harmony. In 2015 alone, over 1 billion roubles had been allocated to a programme in that regard. A Crimean Tatar television channel called Millet had been launched and around 30 media outlets used the different languages of the peoples of Crimea.

105. It would be more honest for the representative of Ukraine to speak of attempts by Ukrainian radical organizations, with the connivance of the authorities, to establish a food and economic blockade of Crimea or how, over the 20 years of Ukraine's independence, the problems of Crimean Tatars had been at best ignored by the authorities. It was only now that Kyiv had become their active champions on the international stage.

106. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Human Rights Committee, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and others had repeatedly pointed to critical human rights problems in Ukraine, highlighting the lack of

effective legal and political measures taken by the Ukrainian authorities to restore the rights of Crimean Tatars who had returned to Ukraine, difficulties in receiving Ukrainian citizenship, low representation of Crimean Tatars in government agencies, the unwillingness of law enforcement bodies to investigate offences motivated by intolerance, the desecration of religious and cultural objects and Muslim cemeteries, the ignoring by the authorities of the socioeconomic problems of Crimean Tatars, the ineffectiveness of legislation on the prevention of discrimination, restrictions on the use of Crimean Tatar in regional and local government agencies, the lack of schools teaching in Crimean Tatar, the fact that Crimean Tatar could not be used in courts and the State's withdrawal of support for Crimean Tatar media outlets. Those recommendations, comments and criticisms had been made by international human rights structures and institutes, not the Russian Federation.

107. It was a shame that the Ukrainian authorities were so blindly following the example of their American mentors who so loved to tell of how mature their democracy was even when there were numerous systemic problems in the field of human rights in the United States of America that had long needed to be addressed.

108. Her delegation would like to call on States that were hosting multilateral international forums to facilitate access to such events for representatives of civil society, even though their position did not always conform to the official line of the countries concerned.

109. **Mr. Yaremenko** (Ukraine) said that the Kremlin had started planning to take control of Crimea long before the disappearance of the former President of Ukraine, Viktor Yanukovych, which had been on 22 February 2014. Even the Russian campaign medal for the return of Crimea, produced by the Russian Federation's Ministry of Defence, marked the dates of the campaign as 20 February 2014 to 18 March 2014, which was proof of the early, non-spontaneous preparations for the invasion. Within days, unmarked Russian forces had taken over the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol. Following a fake referendum, which purported to show majority support for joining Russia, President Vladimir Putin had signed a treaty of accession with the self-declared independent Republic of Crimea and absorbed it into the Russian Federation, despite the fact that the annexation had not been recognized by most of the international community. The so-called treaty had been signed by the Russian President on 18 March, the date on the medal. On 27 March 2014, the General Assembly had adopted resolution 68/262, calling upon States not to recognize changes to the integrity of Ukraine.

110. The only legitimate representatives of the Crimean Tatars, the Mejlis, denounced the illegal occupation and the attempt to annex the Autonomous Republic of Crimea.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.